

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0010] with the following amended paragraph:

[0010] These and other objects of the invention as will become apparent from the detailed description to follow are served by a personal assistance apparatus supported from a wheeled, H-shape base frame. The assistance apparatus comprises a mast having its axis set at a small angle, 5° from vertical, for example, to confine translation of a bucket type seat in both directions along the mast axis. In the presently preferred embodiment, seat translation along the mast is driven by a parallel axis linear actuator that is energized by an electric motor. Elements are aligned to allow the load support plane of the seat to be driven down the mast to substantially coincide with the floor plane ~~[[contact]]~~ within a stability area delineated by the perimeter defined by the apparatus support wheels. As the seat approaches floor contact, a follower mechanism activates a braking mechanism to immobilize the apparatus support wheels. Such immobilization of the support wheels provides resistance to external forces imposed by an infirm user's efforts to enter the seat.

Please replace paragraph [0014] with the following amended paragraph:

[0014] Referring to Figures 1 through 4, a presently preferred embodiment of the invention comprises a substantially H-shaped base frame 10 supported by four wheels 12, 13, 14 and 15. These support wheels are set near the extremities of the H-frame legs to define the perimeter of an interior stability area. The front wheels 12 and 13 may have a fixed rotational plane whereas the rear wheels 14 and 15 are preferably castered about a substantially vertical axis.

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

[0022] As the descending load support plane of the seat 36 approaches the supporting floor surface, a wheel braking system 60 is engaged to prevent the unit

from moving due to the care-receiver's manipulations into the seat. A simple but effective brake assembly 60 is represented by the schematic of Figure 8 which comprises a friction shoe 61 respective to each front wheel 13 and 14. The schematic of Figure 8 illustrates only wheel 13 but the elements shown are to be understood as duplicated on the opposite side of the apparatus respective to wheel 12.

Please replace paragraph [0023] with the following amended paragraph:

[0023] The friction shoes 61 [[64]] are secured to respective shoe carriers 54. The shoe carriers are pivotally secured at 55 to the frame 10. Also pivotally connected to each shoe carrier 54 is one end of a link rod 62. The opposite end of each link rod is pivotally secured to the driven arm of a bell crank 63. The bell crank 63 is pivotally secured at 56 to a frame element 10.

Please replace paragraph [0025] with the following amended paragraph:

[0025] Above the cross member 17, the load rods 65 are structurally connected by an upper load bar 67. Threaded assembly components 68 above and below the upper load bar 67 provide means to adjust the spacial [[special]] separation between the upper face of the cross member 17 and the lower face of the upper load bar 67.

Please replace paragraph [0027] with the following amended paragraph:

[0027] The schematic of Figure 8 illustrates the brake [[break]] assembly 60 at the shoe engaged position where the wheels 12 and 13 are restrained from rotating. This engaged position is imposed by the lower edge 33 of the seat carrier sleeve 32 as it bears against the upper load bar 67 [[64]] when the descending seat 30 approaches floor level.

Please replace paragraph [0028] with the following amended paragraph:

[0028] At the point that the shoes 61 are firmly set against the wheels 12 and 13, the upper load bar 67 passes the abutment edge 82 of a brake ~~[[break]]~~ retainer assembly 80. The brake ~~[[break]]~~ retainer assembly comprises a bell crank pivoted strap 84 that may be pivotally anchored about the axis 86. The vertical leg 88 of the bell crank is terminated by a hook feature 81. A horizontal leg 89 of the assembly 80 is a break release tab.

Please replace paragraph [0030] with the following amended paragraph:

[0030] The brake engagement is maintained by the brake retainer assembly 80 after the edge 33 of the seat carrier sleeve 32 is raised above and off the upper load bar 67. Brake release is obtained by manually applied force on the release tab 89 which rotates the bell crank 84 against the bias of spring 94 and displaces the hook abutment 82 from the operating plane of load bar 67. With the hook abutment removed, the bias of brake ~~[[break]]~~ release spring 66 pulls the brake ~~[[break]]~~ shoes 61 from engagement with the wheels 12 and 13.

Please replace paragraph [0033] with the following amended paragraph:

[0033] With the fallen spouse sitting erect, buttocks on the floor, the machine is aligned closely behind the fallen spouse and the seat 36 lowered to the floor by the tethered control console 74. To facilitate efforts by the fallen spouse to position themselves upon the seat structure, the load support plane of the seat 36 is lowered as close to the floor plane as reasonably possible. Referring to Figures 3 and 4, in particular, it is seen that the bottom-most structural surfaces of the load support platform 30 physically engage the floor surface whereby the support plane of the seat 30 is contiguous with the floor plane. Contiguous, in this context, may mean a

separation of the seat support plane from the floor plane by only the material thickness of the seat structure. As the seat 36 structure approaches floor plane contact, the brake assembly 60 engages the wheels 12 and 13 to firmly secure the machine position on the floor.

Please replace paragraph [0037] with the following amended paragraph:

[0037] Non-illustrated embodiments of the invention having no arms or removable arms for the load platform (seat) 30 may be given household and light industrial uses and utilities beyond lifting duties for the ambulatory infirm. One example of such household utility may be as a powered step platform for reaching high shelves and cabinets. An example of light industrial use may be the placement and removal of 100+ pound stock in a lathe. Both examples may require a load platform plane that is positioned substantially level with the supporting floor surface but is also immobilized along that floor surface when load is deposited on or discharged from the platform.